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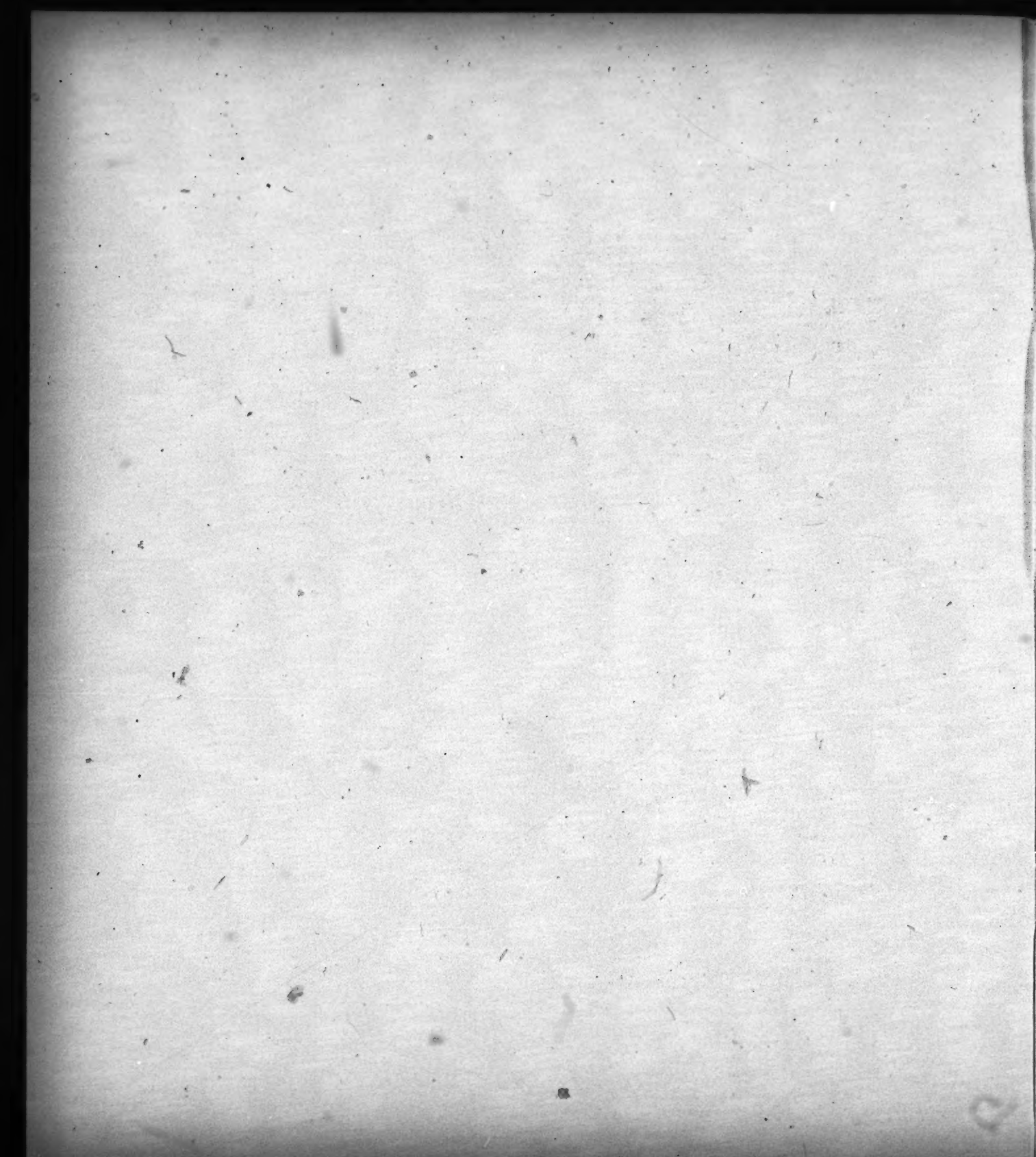
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General



The Paintings of Washington Allston

March 6 through April 13, 1975

Organized by the Lowe Art Museum

Greater Miami Celebrates



America's Bicentennial

Information

MUSEUM HOURS: Monday through Friday, 12 noon to 5 p.m. (Offices open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.); Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

MUSEUM INFORMATION: Telephone: 305-284-3535, write to the Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, 1301 Miller Drive, Coral Gables, Florida 33146.

ADMISSION FREE: Guided tours by volunteer members of the Lowe Art Museum Docent Guild are available. Please call ten days in advance.

EXHIBITIONS: The Beaux Arts, the Friends of Art and Society of the Lowe Art Museum membership fees provide a major portion of the funds necessary to support Lowe Art Museum exhibitions.

MUSEUM STAFF: John J. Baratte, Director; Paul E. Thompson, Assistant Director; Ms. Donna Ray, Assistant to the Director; Ms. Carol Hotchkiss, Registrar; Ms. Janet Jacek, Assistant Registrar; Ms. Nancy Krantz, Museum Secretary; Mrs. Kathryn Spancake, Assistant Museum Secretary; Ms. Melanie Dalton, Membership Secretary and Receptionist; Elliott Stringer, Building Superintendent; Richard Johanning, Installation Engineer; Victor Zamora, Housekeeper; Lonnie Templeton, Electronics Supervisor; Museum Guards: Ms. Betty Walker, Chief Guard; Ms. Delphine Walker.

Cover:

Jason Returning to Demand His Father's Kingdom (detail); 1807-1808, oil and chalk on canvas, 168" x 240". Lowe Art Museum collection. Photo by Ray Fisher.

Preface

Washington Allston's contribution to the cultural milieu of his day and to succeeding generations of artists is well known among art historians and connoisseurs. Beyond that circle, however, his considerable stature has not been widely understood. The last major exhibition of Allston's work occurred in 1948. Most of his best pieces are in museums, with many in delicate condition and requiring extensive conservation before being shown. Some are quite large. Many are unfinished, and several have yet to be dated. All this adds to the fact that most of Allston's output is simply not available to the public.

The Lowe Art Museum was quite fortunate in receiving twelve paintings from the Washington Allston Trust several years ago, making the Museum one of the major repositories of his

work. Nine are in exhibition condition, including the huge, unfinished "Jason Returning to Demand His Father's Kingdom." This exhibition is long overdue.

Allston's influence among early nineteenth century American and British intellectuals, so ably discussed by E.P. Richardson in his book on the artist and in the essays of Kenyon C. Bolton III and Elizabeth Johns that follow here, was without parallel among our country's artists until he proved it possible. Many trod the ground he broke among the cultural elite in the days when those educated and with access to art products formed almost the total art public.

The Lowe is grateful to Messrs. Richardson and Bolton and Ms. Johns, and to the several museums, galleries, and private collectors for their cooperation in this important project.

John J. Baratte
Director



Tragic Figure in Chains, 1800, oil on panel, 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ " $\times$ 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". *The Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy. (Not in exhibition.)*

In the nineteen forties E.P. Richardson defined the problem of Allston's art in this way:

"What was the nature of that impulse toward an ideal and monumental art which was the first independent movement of American painting as it emerged from its apprenticeship in the Colonial portrait tradition?"

"Allston is interesting as a type of the artistic imagination. The problems of the imagination do not change so rapidly as the outward circumstances of life but remain to a large extent constant. To a great degree the problems of the American artist in Allston's time are those of the American artist of our time. The absence of a strong technical tradition, the relation between inspiration and conscious art, between originality and tradition, between our awareness of what other peoples are doing and our awareness of ourselves, the general relation of the artist to his society and of the imaginative life to practical life—all these have changed little since Allston's day. One might almost say that the problems left unresolved by the Romantics have become the problems we must face today."

This exhibition should help in the understanding of Washington Allston as an important Romantic artist of the nineteenth century.

"Washington Allston is the chief figure of the first group of American artists to appear after the American Revolution. Born in 1779, halfway through the War for Independence, he represents the first generation which had no memories of what the world was like before the political separation from Europe. He was the most able and many-sided figure of that generation, which initiated our earliest national movement in

painting, and was the pioneer in creating an ideal art upon American soil. The passage in our artistic life within which his achievement falls—the "historical style" was what the nineteenth century called the movement of romantic idealism—is one which has for a long time been out of fashion. But the initial independent efforts of most men who first made the world aware, some one hundred and fifty years ago, that this country had begun to produce artists were toward the creation of a monumental and ideal art. Their fame died out in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century these works have been treated almost universally with pitying amusement, as examples of absurdity and failure. Yet one may wonder why the earliest ambitious efforts of American painting should arouse only ridicule instead of curiosity to inquire what caused these artists to be what they are.

"Allston was our first full-scale romantic artist. This in a sentence is his importance, for, in so being, he changed the character and enlarged the horizon of American art. Like most other romantic painters, he was uneven; but it was the unevenness of a pioneer. American painting had in him, for the first time, an artist who wished to explore the whole range of the art of painting—monumental painting (murals), narrative painting (the world of the inner life, or ideas, memories, thoughts, and dreams expressed in men's action), portrait painting (human character in its individual aspect), landscape and architecture (the world of nature about

us and the setting man makes for himself), animals and still life (the individual details of nature, both animate and inanimate). No artist on this side of the Atlantic had before attempted to paint such a range of interests. His work and the influence of his life as an artist were felt throughout the imaginative being of this country in its first years of independent effort."

Edgar Preston Richardson, **Washington Allston**, The University of Chicago Press, 1948; Second Edition, The Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1967.



2 Landscape, 1801-1803, oil on canvas, 28"×38". *The Concord Free Library, Concord, Massachusetts.*

INTRODUCTION

Washington Allston, the 19th century American landscape and history painter, was the main link between American and English romanticists for over a quarter of a century. From 1818 to 1843 he lived in the Boston area and was the major intermediary between English and American painters and poets. His acquaintances included Englishmen such as Samuel Coleridge and John Martin and Americans such as S. F. B. Morse and Horatio Greenough. His influence as an intermediary differed from that of Benjamin West who was the major teacher of American painters in Europe until 1820, when West died in London.

Biblical, theatrical, landscape, and reverie scenes served as subjects for Allston's paintings of romantic mood and color. Many of his romantic paintings were history paintings as defined by Sir Joshua Reynolds in his *DISCOURSES*. Reynolds said history painting of scenes from biblical, literary, and historical moments was the highest form of painting because it demanded the greatest skill.

Impact of Europe:

While Allston's character and personality were formed in the United States, it was in Europe that he found the techniques, training and subjects for his pictures. During his first trip to London and Rome, he cemented his friendships with the painters and poets who were striving to express the ideals and aspirations that one finds reflected in his work. The awe of nature and appreciation of the unseen mysteries of life sensed in Coleridge's *ANCIENT MARINER* and *KUBLA KHAN* can also be seen in Allston's *ELIJAH IN THE DESERT* or *MOONLIT LANDSCAPE*.

It was in Britain, between 1811 and 1818, that Allston achieved fame with the works which were most in tune with such of his contemporaries as

Coleridge, Flaxman and Martin. He achieved his first major success with *DEAD MAN REVIVED BY TOUCHING THE BONES OF THE PROPHET ELISHA* (1811-1813), which was eventually bought (1816) at the urging of Thomas Sully for the newly formed Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art. This picture led to a friendship with the important patron Lord George Beaumont who commissioned Allston to paint an altarpiece. Allston's reputation was heightened by his success in 1817 with *URIEL IN THE SUN* and *ELIJAH IN THE DESERT*, which were bought by well-known collectors. The peak of his reputation was achieved when Lord Egremont (Turner's legendary patron) bought *JACOB'S DREAM* (1817).

In Boston there were few exhibitions and fewer buildings requiring the huge canvases of his European pictures. After his return to Boston in 1818, the enormous *BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST* remained unfinished while Allston tried to make a living from the sale of smaller pictures. Allston's personal charm and attractive disposition were glowingly described by Coleridge, Irving and Morse. His engaging personality supported his efforts as a painter-poet, and may help to explain why ten Boston gentlemen were eventually persuaded (in 1820) to subscribe one thousand dollars each to a fund for the purchase of *BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST*. Allston was not able to maintain the energetic output of the period following his return to Boston. The reduction in production is partially explained by his efforts on *BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST*, the absence of stimulation from his British peers and his reoccurring ill health. His paintings from the 1830s were often reverie scenes or landscapes which clearly responded to Boston's intellectual and literary climate during the transcendental period. Many of the late canvases which were developments of English themes were never finished as paintings. As

drawings, however, they are remarkable, and testify to Allston's continued growth after his removal from the London scene.

Cultural influences:

Art produced in England during the first quarter of the 19th century often contained specific references to prior European painting and Greek and Roman Sculpture. An admiration for the great painters of the Renaissance was implicit in Joshua Reynolds' *Discourses*. Michelangelo and Raphael stood high in his estimation, and the latter's *HELIODORUS DRIVEN FROM THE TEMPLE* and *ANGEL RELEASING ST. PETER FROM PRISON* in the Vatican may have served as precedents for Allston's versions. Allston also made copies from Rubens, and received inspiration from Rembrandt for *BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST* and *JACOB'S DREAM*. Allston's life-long interest in color and glazes can be traced in part to Titian and Veronese, whose works in the Louvre he copied. In landscape, the two major traditions of the Poussins and Claude continued to serve as the basis for Allston's ideal compositions, as they had for the preceding generation of English landscape painters.

An interest in antique Greek and Roman sculpture was added to this admiration for great painters of the past. In Europe, basic figure drawing was taught from plaster casts or from models who assumed poses from works like the *APOLLO BELVEDERE* or the *BORGHESE WARRIOR*. In addition, it was while Allston was in England that his friends Benjamin Haydon and John Flaxman fought for the public acceptance of the Elgin marbles. That some of the figures from Allston's *DEAD MAN REVIVED*... were derived from those Parthenon sculptures reveals his participation in contemporary

trends. An admiration of these more naturalistic sculptures is often regarded as one of the shifts from the Neo-classic to the Romantic.

Precedents of prior British painting provided a third major influence. Reynolds' techniques and Hogarth's command of humor as well as paint formed an important foundation for Allston's style, while works like West's *DEATH ON A PALE HORSE* (1802) and Fuseli's *ILLUSTRATIONS FROM MILTON* (1800) were important in opening the way for full-blown Romanticism. West's influence on Allston was enormous. He exerted a personal force as example, critic, and technical adviser, and his works provided many of the themes that Allston was to develop later.

Allston was influenced by his peers as well. Of these, Turner and Wilkie are the more highly regarded today. Their works overshadow those of Allston's contemporaries like Flaxman, Haydon and Martin, some of whose paintings more nearly parallel those of Allston. Turner's seascapes influenced Allston's European marines of the early 1800s. It is interesting to note, however, similar interest in sunlight and atmosphere in many of their 1830s landscapes when Allston's distance from the London scene would have made Turner's influence unlikely.

The Grand Manner:

Allston devoted his intellect and energies to the depiction of the dramatic and the grandiose. Concerns with the concept of the sublime, the influence of Benjamin West, and modes of contemporary theater (John Howard Payne was one of his closest friends in London) combined to provide the impetus for this kind of painting. Miracles were the subject of *DEAD MAN REVIVED BY TOUCHING THE*

BONES OF THE PROPHET ELISHA (1811-1813), *ANGEL RELEASING ST. PETER FROM PRISON* (1812), and *CHRIST HEALING THE SICK* (1813). Dramatic moments where man was confronted with the supernatural were made palpable in *BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST* (1817-1843), *SAUL AND THE WITCH* (1820) and *DEATH OF KING JOHN* (ca. 1837). In these pictures, Allston explored the borderground of human experience. The basis for this interest lay in his religious convictions and belief that there was more to life than could be perceived with the eye.

In the rush to label Allston the first American romantic painter, art historians have glossed over some of the neo-classic content in his work in the grand manner. This can be explained in part by the inextricable intertwining of the Neo-classic and the Romantic. Some of Hogarth's, Fuseli's, and West's paintings, for example, because of their handling, color, and emotion can be labeled Romantic.

The notion persists, however, that the least creative kinds of painting are those which depend on older formulas for their style. Allston's advances over the formulas of West are an example of "incremental adaptation." He worked towards injecting motion into his composition and improving the psychological realism of the critical moment portrayed. In spite of his improvements, the hard contours, sculptural drapery, and studied groupings, which marked the academic phase of Neo-classicism, are found in Allston's efforts in the grand manner. It is a pity that Allston never completed such late works in the grand manner as *THE DEATH OF KING JOHN*, which best illustrates his achievement of emotional depth in history painting. As a result, although one can easily admire portions of the noble compositions, other aspects of his work are more pleasing to our 20th century sensibilities.

Belshazzar's Feast:

The 19th Century's tragic view of Allston revolves around his failure to complete *BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST*. Perhaps inspired by a poem, or Rembrandt's *BELSHAZZAR'S VISION OF THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL*, Allston conceived his version in England in 1817. He showed his preparatory sketches to John Martin (famous painter of awe-inspiring architectural fantasies) whose own version of the subject created a sensation in Europe (1821). Martin expanded Allston's composition and increased the dramatic content. The two versions' many elements in common suggest that he "pinched" Allston's idea. Martin's later plagiarisms from Francis Danby's initial sketch for the *DELUGE* supports the idea that these similarities were not merely accidental. When Allston resumed his efforts on the canvas, which he had set aside on his return to Boston, Martin's intervening success and his own development may have prompted him to take Gilbert Stuart's advice to change the perspective. Backed by the Trust of ten thousand dollars, he set out to make the required changes in the painting. Later moves to smaller studios and his marriage to Martha Dana (1831) made necessary his setting the canvas aside again and again. Bedevilled by a curious public and burdened by the obligation to finish the picture, however, he gathered his forces together for a final major effort in 1839. While he was unable to finish it by the time of his death in 1843, many of the drawings for *BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST* clearly demonstrate Allston's improvements over the initial study. These late drawings and the excellence of the unfinished *SHIP IN A SQUALL* (before 1837), *TTANIA'S COURT* (before 1837), and *DEATH OF KING JOHN*

(before 1837) should do much to dispel the aura of failure which hangs over his last years.

Landscape:

From the early LANDSCAPE (1798) to SHIP IN A SQUALL (before 1837), landscapes and marines were a major part of Allston's output. They represent, in my opinion, his most successful work. While the clarity and cool coloring of RISING STORM AT SEA (painted in Paris in 1804) seem to echo the Neoclassicism of Joseph Vernet, the similarities in the handling of sea and sky to Turner's EGREMONT SEA PIECE (exhibited in London in 1802) reveal the latter's influence at this period. DIANA AND THE CHASE (1805) and ITALIAN LANDSCAPE (1805) are ideal compositions using elements from the drawings of mountains and trees which Allston made in Switzerland while on his way to Italy. The style of these paintings is a synthesis of traditions, including those of Claude and the Poussins. Allston's Venetian-inspired glazing and color gives these ideal landscapes a clarity and depth which sets them apart from similar British pictures by Wilson and Lambert, or German ones by Koch and Schick. Thirteen years later, the mature Allston evolved a more personal vision in ELLIAH IN THE DESERT (rapidly painted in casein for the 1818 exhibition) using the weathered tree, dramatic clouds and waterfall which were to become standard elements of Thomas Cole's fully Romantic landscapes.

After his return to Boston, Allston continued to develop his landscape style. MOONLIT LANDSCAPE (1819) is a major precedent for American painting. It anticipates the Luminists and establishes a theme to be pursued by such diverse painters as Albert Ryder and Thomas H. Benton. MOONLIT LANDSCAPE's brooding light and

sense of atmosphere combine to make mood the dominant subject. The late ITALIAN LANDSCAPE (1830) and LANDSCAPE, AMERICAN SCENERY: TIME, AFTERNOON, WITH A SOUTHWEST HAZE (1835) have a warmer color and looser technique than earlier works. While their concern with light and atmosphere parallel Turner's of the same period, they evoke a mood and dream world which is Allston's alone. Finally in the chalk drawing on primed canvas (once brown, now black) of a SHIP IN A SQUALL (before 1837), Allston achieved one of the most powerful American drawings of the early 19th Century. The rhythm on the lines breathes life into the waves and gives air and water a sense of motion around the ghostly ship. Although never finished as a painting, as a drawing it is complete.

Images of Reverie:

After his return to Boston (in 1818), Allston began to revive his theme of a single figure lost in thought known as an "Image of reverie." Perhaps developed from the British formula for portraying women as muses, Allston's graceful figures became softened in outline and suffused with glowing atmosphere. This was a personal treatment far removed from the later European development of similar subject matter by Courbet and Feuerbach. Allston's images of reverie were not limited to the subjects of young women such as BEATRICE (1819), SPANISH GIRL IN REVERIE (1831), or ROSALIE (1835), but also include others like ITALIAN SHEPHERD BOY (1819) and LORENZO AND JESSICA (1832). Ultimately the quality of dream takes over, and the mood evoked dominates the figure depicted.

Portraiture:

Allston was the first artist of stature to make a living in America without having to depend on portraiture. He did, nevertheless, produce many portraits of his family and friends, and his style underwent a variety of changes. Such an early attempt (produced at Newport and Harvard) as his SELF PORTRAIT (1796-1800) reflects the influence of his friend, the miniaturist Malbone. Allston's later SELF PORTRAIT (1805) reflects the influence of the Germans in Rome in its background and color, but its pose and Neoclassic style relate specifically to Vanderlyn's SELF PORTRAIT (1800). Like many of those painted before his return to England in 1811, Allston's portrait of WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING (1809) bears many resemblances to Vanderlyn's style of the early 1800's as seen in the latter's portrait of AARON BURR (1802-3). Allston's formula draws most heavily on Gilbert Stuart's method of portraying a sitter's head against a somber background, but is combined with the simplicity of pose and gravity of tone inspired by the diverse European influences of David and Raphael.

Allston attempted his most ambitious portraits during his last European period. The portrait of SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1814) is perhaps most successful, with its spotlighted head, solid form and suggestion of a Gothic interior. The portrait of SAMUEL WILLIAMS (ca. 1818) however, fails to combine successfully the brilliant Italian background and baroque setting with the monumental gravity and solemn tone inherent in Allston's depiction of character. This philosophical concern with character and moral strength combined with a repetitive glazing process to preclude the achievement of the "bravura" delights, which were basic to the success of Lawrence and Sully.

Genre:

Allston enjoyed a marvelous sense of humor. At Harvard where he was known for his high spirits and lively sense of fun, he wrote humorous verse. The BUCK'S PROGRESS series (1796), which take their cue from Hogarth, are examples of the kind of satirical drawings that he produced as an undergraduate. These drawings have a freshness that is lost in such later anecdotal paintings as THE POOR AUTHOR AND THE RICH BOOKSELLER (1811). Perhaps his laborious glazing technique killed the light touch and spontaneity which along with deft character portrayal are essential to the success of this kind of subject. Recent research (by William Gerdts) suggests that Edward Bird (well-known Bristol genre painter during Allston's lengthy stay there in 1814) was an important source for his approach to Genre painting. SCENE IN AN EATING HOUSE (ca. 1814) and the unfinished TAVERN SCENE are similar in many ways to Bird's best known work, the RAFFLE OF THE WATCH. It is worth noting that with the exception of two anecdotal illustrations for Irving's KNICKERBOCKER'S HISTORY (part of a series achieved in conjunction with his pupil, C. R. Leslie, around 1819), Allston gave up genre painting after his return to Boston.

Conclusion:

This exhibition is a part of a second major wave of interest in the art of the early nineteenth century, which follows on the heels of the Arts Council of Great Britain's mammoth exhibition THE AGE OF NEO CLASSICISM (1972) and the Metropolitan Museum's exhibition NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA (1970). The first 20th century revival of interest in Allston occurred in the late 1940s and was the result of the scholarly interest in the period which led to the

groundbreaking exhibition ROMANTIC PAINTING IN AMERICA (1943) at the Museum of Modern Art. During the 1940s, scholars established an understanding and appreciation of 19th century American art by rediscovering previously neglected works. The current wave is a reaction against the limited investigation of the 1940s into the national character of the works. For Allston this implies a closer examination of the European influences on his works and those facets which are not clearly Romantic. Allston's history paintings reflect the tastes of his time. The complexity of these works was unavoidable due to his position as an intermediary between the American and European cultures.

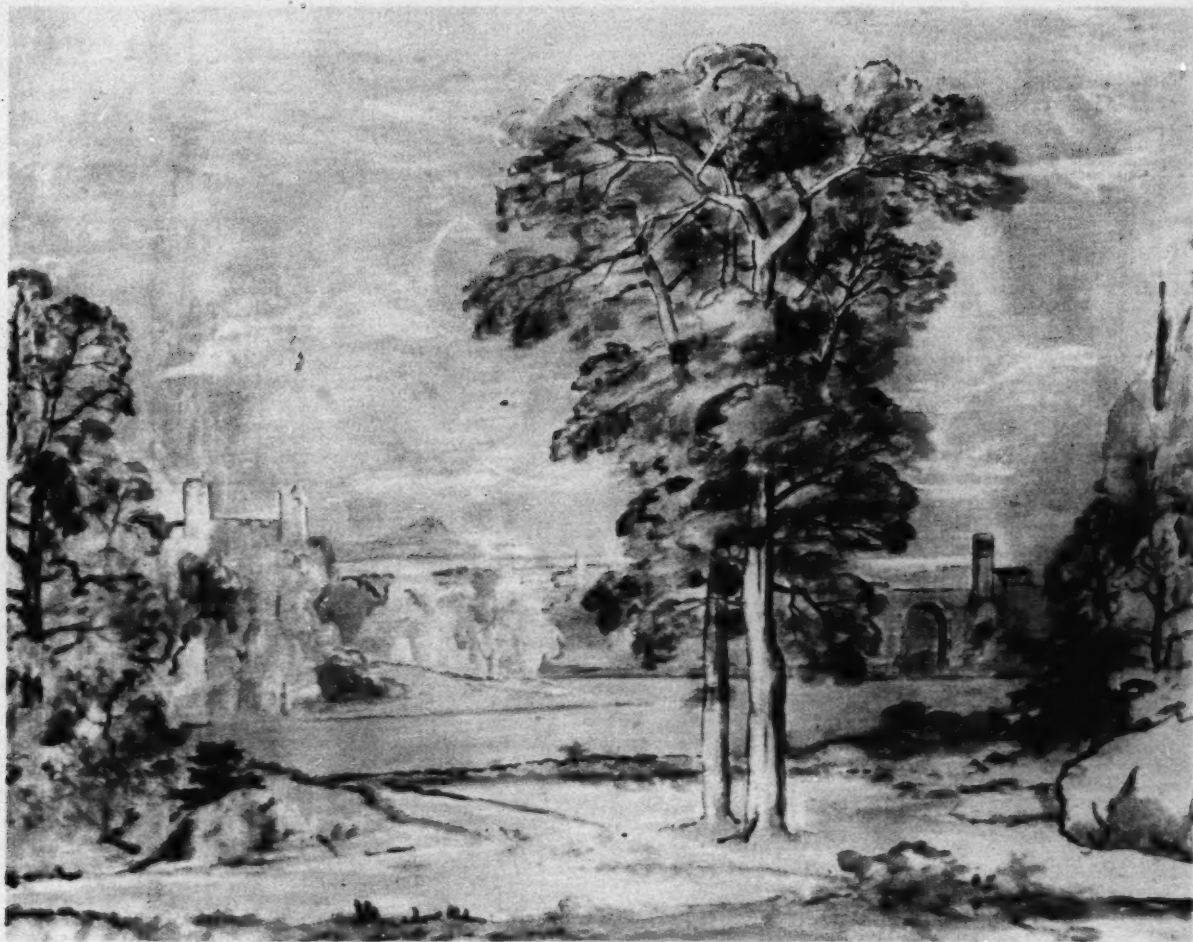
While Allston's fame rested primarily on his European works DEAD MAN REVIVED . . . , URIEL IN THE SUN, ELIJAH IN THE DESERT, and JACOB'S DREAM, his most well known pictures today are such romantic works as MOONLIT LANDSCAPE and SHIP IN A SQUALL. His English works embody the taste of his period for such things as the brown tonality found also at that time on master works dating from the Renaissance. With their more naturalistic color and atmosphere, however, Allston's landscapes are more generally admired today.

Once back in America, Allston began to develop a more personal landscape style, which was an extension of his prior synthesis of European influences. Allston's style was more often based on actual studies than has been realized, and his later landscapes reflect the nature of his American drawings. In the sheer ability to handle paint, however, Allston surpassed his contemporaries Fisher and Doughty, who were making the first tentative steps towards a native landscape style.

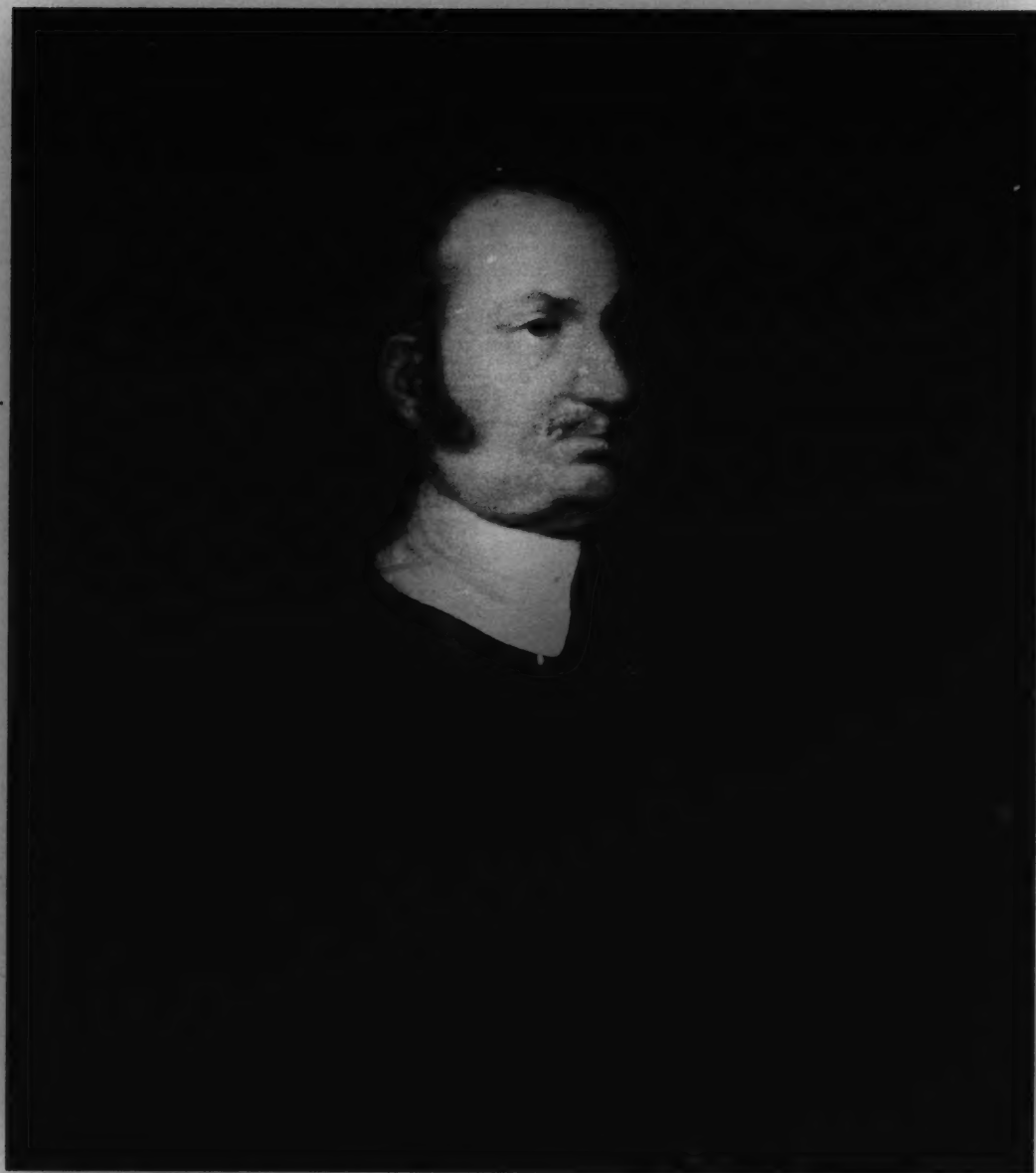
Allston must be recognized as one of the key artists and personalities of his

period. It was he who introduced the following generation of American painters to Europe after the death of West. In addition, he personally embodied the link between literary and pictorial Romanticism of the early 19th century, and helped set a high standard of quality for the generation that followed.

Kenyon C. Bolton III



3 Landscape, 1801-1803, oil and chalk on canvas, 29"×36". M. Knoedler & Co., Inc., New York City.



4 **Man of the Theater**, c. 1803, oil on canvas, 30½"×27¾". Kennedy Galleries, New York City.

WASHINGTON ALLSTON: THE ARTIST AS PHILOSOPHER

As a Romantic phenomenon the European-trained American artist Washington Allston has provoked a variety of points of view in analysis. His Boston contemporaries did not try to define his Romanticism—it is a way of thinking that was recognized only considerably after the Romantic period had passed—but they reacted to his work with general agreement that he was the greatest American artist thus far produced by our country. Critics later in the century saw Allston as a moral exemplar, but noting his many incompleting paintings pressed the conviction that his return to America from England in 1818 had caused him intellectual starvation and the gradual desiccation of his talent. With twentieth-century interest rekindled in Allston by Edgar P. Richardson in his monograph and exhibitions of 1948, our attention was called to elements in the paintings themselves—atmospheres of reverie, “veiled by memory,” landscapes with solitary dreaming figures, the coloristic rather than linear quality of the paintings, and the wide variety of types of subject matter essayed by Allston—history or narrative, landscape, literary, caricature, and portraiture. Most recent studies have investigated Allston’s early years in Rome and his participation in the American idealization of Italy as Arcadia.¹

All these aspects of Allston’s career remain separate external manifestations of his Romanticism. A unifying approach to Allston, that enables us to penetrate to the vital force which expressed itself in these various directions, is to consider him as a metaphysician, for to be a Romantic was to have a peculiar world-view. It is Allston as a Romantic philosopher that explains Allston as an artist.

In 1818 Samuel Taylor Coleridge evaluated Allston as a man of “high and rare genius . . . whether I contemplate him in the character of a Poet, a Painter, or

a philosophic Analyst.”² As a literary man, Coleridge himself led the kind of intellectual life he admired in Allston; by 1818 Coleridge not only had written a small but great body of poetry (“The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” is one of the best known of all English Romantic poems), but he had produced an enduring body of literary and Shakespearean criticism, political essays, and theological essays, all of which he prefaced with a solid philosophical foundation. Allston, like Coleridge, explored several intellectual areas: not only painting and the vast range of subject matter of interest at that time, but poetry, the novel, epistemology, aesthetics, and theology.³ Allston recognized that his early friendship with Coleridge was seminal; in the early 1830’s he wrote to William Dunlap, America’s first art historian, who was researching the development and accomplishments of the new country’s artists, “to no other man whom I have known, do I owe so much intellectually, as to Mr. Coleridge.”⁴ Allston’s conviction of the importance of the central philosophical core in the artist and his investigations is stated succinctly in his *Lectures on Art*: the artist’s education involves “not only the growth and expansion of the intellect, but a corresponding development of the moral being; for the wisdom of the intellect is of little worth, if it be not in harmony with the higher spiritual truth . . . [The artist] must sound no less than the full depths of his being ere he is fitted for his calling.”⁵

The crucial world-view that shaped Allston’s Romantic philosophy and informed his work derived from the English and German philosophical tradition. Eighteenth-century Lockean empiricism—the theory that the mind brings only a “tabula rasa,” or blank tablet, to perception and therefore learns only by memory and association—

very influential on English artists, had its most famous adherent in Sir Joshua Reynolds, president of the Royal Academy in London from its inception in 1769 until his death in 1792. In his *Discourses on Art*, delivered every two years at Academy ceremonies and thereafter printed, Reynolds explicated the Academy philosophy which prevailed even beyond Allston’s studies at the Academy from 1801–03. According to Reynolds the artist’s model was nature, but not nature as he perceived it with all its imperfections. The artist abstracted from imperfect nature to arrive at an ideal, called “general nature,” which he then portrayed on canvas. This ideal was not that of Platonic idealism, for it had no real existence, either in the human mind or God’s mind. Instead, it served to eliminate that which seemed accidental in a world of objects and sensations and to transfix that which seemed most representative of life’s flux. The empirical theories of association—that the mind could be strongly affected by situations, experiences, or colors with which it associated specific reactions, as for example the theories that darkness arouses horror and smoothness relaxation—received their most influential verification in Edmund Burke’s *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, published in 1756, and thereafter artists exploited these putative effects of subjects of horror, taking many themes from Shakespeare and Milton. Another implication of the association theories was explored by Reynolds: that of using poses and scale to remind the viewer of an earlier artist so that the viewer would transfer associations from the earlier work to the present one.

Each of these aspects of empiricism Allston transformed in his own work and theories. The transforming agent was his contact with the German organic tradition initiated by Immanuel Kant with

his philosophical treatises from 1770 to 1790.⁶ In reacting against empiricism, rationalism—the faith that reason could propound all earth's mysteries—and radical skepticism—the view put forth by the Scotsman David Hume that nothing was knowable—Kant formulated “transcendental idealism.” He proposed that the mind apprehended external reality through mental categories which in fact preceded, and therefore shaped, perception. God guaranteed a congruence between mental and physical reality. Kant relegated the discursive reason of the rationalists to the status of the understanding, making it inferior to the intuitive sense of reality that he redefined as reason.

Allston was undoubtedly introduced to German organicism by Coleridge, and probably in the early years of his London tenure between 1811 and 1818. Organicism established a metaphysical basis for Allston's already evidenced reverence for nature, color, and his predecessors in the artistic tradition. As he explained his world-view in his *Lectures on Art*, Allston saw the world as inextricably dual. No less real than physical objects were mental ideas; each affirmed the existence of the other, but ideas had only a potential existence until called into being by the presence of a physical object. The harmony between object and idea, or the visible and the invisible, was predetermined by God. Ideas, Allston theorized, are of two types, both intuitively apprehended: primary ideas are the ideas of God, not fully realizable by man; secondary ideas are the product of man's own consciousness. Because every human mind is unique, every secondary idea is individual; but because God's ideas are archetypal for man's, all man's ideas bear a true relationship to those of God. God guarantees the harmony among primary ideas, secondary ideas, and the physical world. Thus a work of art is the artist's

realization of an idea unique to him, but the truth of the art, that is, its relationship to the primary idea and to the minds of other men, can dependably be intuited by a sensitive viewer.

In insisting on the centrality of intuition or *feeling* in the artistic experience, Allston repudiated the Academy tradition of painting by rules. Like Kant Allston delegated rationality to a level considerably below intuition, but because he saw the mental universe as one of harmonious affinities he believed in the absolute reliability of feeling in judging a work of art. Feeling allowed the artist and the observer an instantaneous intuitive recognition of a “living principle” in the work of art, pointing to the Life Principle which is the essential dynamic thrust of the universe.

This intuited, vital, dynamic harmony in the universe is at the center of Allston's Romantic metaphysical faith. As an artist, Allston saw the most outstanding manifestations of harmony in the universe as man's reciprocal relationship with nature, the interrelatedness of image and word, the predominance of mind in the world of matter, the physical phenomenon of color, and the ongoing tradition of art.

Allston's most consistent subject was landscape. As early as during his Harvard days (1796-1800), when he painted on a small scale, he portrayed nature and small figures in pastoral interrelationship. After studying at the Royal Academy, visiting the Louvre for several months, and sketching his way through Switzerland, Allston painted two large, imposing landscapes—*Landscape with a Lake*, 1804 (Boston Museum of Fine Arts) and *Diana in the Chase, or Swiss Scenery*, 1805 (Fogg Art Museum)—which impart a heroism to nature. Both are idealized compositions which incorporate sketches from nature; both are unified by an impressive control of color and glazing which Allston had

learned at the Academy and by his study at the Louvre; and both give man an important position in an imposing natural setting. Perhaps most significant is Allston's double name for the 1805 landscape: “*Diana in the Chase*” evokes the human mythological past; “*Swiss Scenery*” names the eternal, ongoing natural present. For Allston, both are accurate, and in this painting they inform each other. His next several landscapes show him consciously working in the traditions of Poussin's classical landscape (especially *Italian Landscape*, ca. 1805-10, Addison Gallery of American Art) and then the softer Claudian landscape (particularly *Italian Landscape*, 1814, at the Toledo Museum of Art).

On his permanent return to America in 1818, Allston painted a series of landscapes over the next three years which show him settled into a gentle, warm-toned, and modest presentation of humanized nature with man at its center, either at rest or in quiet intercourse with a companion. A significant contrast in Allston's use of color in landscapes is obvious in comparing the early heroic landscapes with the late *Landscape, Indian Summer* (undated) and *Landscape, American Scenery: Time, Afternoon, with a Southwest Haze* (1835, Boston Museum of Fine Arts). *Diana in the Chase, or Swiss Scenery* sparkles with the heavy impasto of local color, although the local color is unified with repeated bright highlights. However, in the 1830's Allston gave his conviction of metaphysical harmony vital expression with his reliance on, first, underpainting to set the warm tone of the entire canvas (in his Color Book notes at the Massachusetts Historical Society he recommends the color orange to establish the warmth of a blue sky), and secondly, glazings over the entire canvas, using the primary colors, to unify the

work in a harmony of red, blue, and yellow or their secondaries, purple/pink, green, and orange/gold.

Most of Allston's landscapes are Italian or classical in inspiration and name, evoking the tradition of great art he felt he was carrying on. His *American Scenery* of 1835 may point to the influence on him of the rising consciousness of American artists of the specifically American landscape as subject. Abandoning a Claudian distance, Allston emphasized in this work the enclosed glade in which the rider, and by extension the viewer, find themselves. The work thus has an immediacy in spatial effect suggestive of the principle of intuition so prominent in Allston's aesthetics. However, it is not an immediacy new to Allston's work, as he had conveyed it, but by different means, in *Diana in the Chase* thirty years earlier.

A well-known Allston landscape is the *Moonlight Landscape* of 1819 (Boston Museum of Fine Arts). It radiates the elements of mystery, dream, and uncertainty that occur often enough in Allston to need some explanation. Although not entirely explained by it, these elements are related to Allston's sense of the close relationship between visual image and word, between painting and story, that was almost a commonplace in eighteenth-century aesthetics. The eighteenth-century English, German, and French preoccupation with painting as narrative enforced the hierarchy of subject matter passed on to Allston in his Academy training. Highest in rank was history painting, the representation on a large canvas of a scene from mythological or Scriptural "history"; in the late eighteenth century the tradition of history painting grew to include actual, contemporary events. Allston, however, with his mind attuned to the achievements of the Italian Renaissance, conceived of history painting first in classical terms and then in a Scriptural context. The

success of history painting demanded an obvious narrative, clear exposition of the dramatic moment in the narrative, and imposing scale and execution. Each requirement, Allston felt, demanded the artist's full command of physical and mental resources; the very fact that the audience shared his knowledge of history and could be counted on to respond to the narrative was one more evidence of the mental and physical harmony in the universe. Here, of course, we know that Allston was due a disappointment; history painting failed in America because of the very lack of a common historical sense.⁷

Allston's first historical painting, the *Jason Returning to Demand His Father's Kingdom*, 1807-08 (Lowe Art Museum), drew on the classical legend of Jason and the Golden Fleece. That Allston was in Rome and was acquainted with the engravings of Jakob Carstens' series on Jason are probably responsible for his choice of subject. After extensive sketching preparations, Allston had finished only the underpainting of the large canvas when he left Rome for America in 1808 to escape Napoleonic hostilities, leaving behind him the uncompleted work. He did not see the painting again for nine years, at which time, when it was shipped to him in England, he had no more interest in classical or allegorical subjects. However, during the years of 1808-17, Allston had not neglected history painting. Instead, he had turned to Biblical subjects. His large *Dead Man Revived by Touching the Bones of the Prophet Elisha*, 1811-13, presently undergoing complete conservation at the Philadelphia Academy of Arts, depicts the moment in Old Testament history when the bones of Elisha miraculously restored life to a corpse. Allston's *Angel Releasing St. Peter from Prison*, 1812 (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts) reveals Peter in his first shock of amazement at the angel's arrival in his prison cell; his

Jacob's Dream 1817 (Petworth, England) shows Jacob prostrate with astonishment at the vision of angels descending and ascending the heavenly steps; and Allston's abortive *Belshazzar's Feast* begun in 1817 (uncompleted canvas at the Detroit Institute of Arts; study at Boston Museum of Fine Arts) sought to portray the incredulity and fear of the king Belshazzar and his astrologers at the phenomenon of the mysterious handwriting on the wall. Two later history paintings also draw on Scriptural sources: *Saul and the Witch of Endor*, 1820 (Amherst College), in which Saul is shocked at the raising of Samuel's ghost, and *Jeremiah Dictating His Prophecy of the Destruction of Jerusalem to Baruch the Scribe*, 1820 (Yale University Art Gallery). Although it is certainly not an error to link the subject matter of these paintings with the English interest in the sublime which inspired Reynolds, West, Fuseli and many others to shadow forth such subjects as Saul and the Witch, Shakespeare's Macbeth and the Witches, and Milton's Satan, Sin, and Death, it is much more accurate to see Allston's choices in terms of his view of the harmony between the physical and spiritual universe. In each narrative he depicted, the dramatic moment consists of man's confrontation with direct, palpable evidence of the ultimate spiritual force in the universe. And in each instance the force is not threatening but life-giving or restorative. Such an idea would have been foreign to a classical or mythological action; an allegory, of which Allston also came to disapprove, would not have involved real human beings facing a real spiritual presence. Allston's work in the history painting tradition, analyzed today as superficial expression without real dramatic force, in Allston's very conception lacked the conflict of real drama. He praised Raphael's *Death of Ananias* for the spirit of tranquillity it ultimately exuded, a tranquillity toward which

Allston strove which testified to the reconciling harmony of the universe.⁸

Another type of manifestation of Allston's conviction of the harmony between image and word is the literary painting. He painted several scenes from Shakespeare, began canvases of Spencer's "Una" (from the *Fairie Queene*), painted Milton's Uriel from *Paradise Lost*, and scenes or characters from Scott, Dante, and Mrs. Radcliffe. As did the history painting, the literary painting depended on an educated audience and implied a core of meaning understood by poets and painters alike.

This core Allston interpreted as the predominance of mind in the universe, manifesting itself in infinite individual ways but always ultimately harmonious with the archetypal ideas of God. Two types of paintings reveal Allston's exaltation of mind. First are the portraits, which he painted only of his friends or relatives rather than as a professional portraitist; perhaps the most famous example is that of *Coleridge*, painted in 1814 and now hanging in the National Portrait Gallery in London. In the American group of portraits, that of *William Ellery Channing*, 1809 (Boston Museum of Fine Arts) captures vividly the intense quality of the mind of the sitter. The power of Channing's mental presence obviates any need for baroque background and details of dress.

A second type of painting exalting the mind became an increasingly important part of Allston's oeuvre as he grew older: the idealized figure dreaming in a landscape. Probably the first such work was *Contemplation*, painted in England before 1818 and now owned by Lord Egremont at Petworth; in it a young woman with a book dreams in an enclosed glade, at once near and remote from the observer. Once in America Allston pursued this theme by painting from sketches of a young boy that he had made fifteen years earlier in Rome. The *Italian*

Shepherd Boy of 1819 presents a delicate, reflective boy, flute at rest by his side, whose situation in a forest clearing shows him participating in the natural setting and yet conferring meaning on it. Two years later Allston enlarged the boy in a painting with the same title (Brooklyn Museum); the shepherd boy is nearer the surface plane and yet more etherealized in Allston's handling of spatial form and flesh tones. The gentle, femininely receiving quality of mind that Allston saw as most sensitive to the harmony in the universe emanates even more obviously from his later figures: *Spanish Girl in Reverie*, 1831 (Metropolitan Museum of Art); *A Tuscan Girl*, 1831 (private collection); *Lorenzo and Jessica*, 1832 (private collection); *The Evening Hymn*, 1835 (Montclair Art Museum); and *Rosalie*, 1835 (Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities). Allston evolved poems as he worked on several of these paintings, expressing the dreaming figures' perception of spiritual reality.⁹ *Rosalie* sees a "nameless light . . . that veils the world I see;" the *Tuscan girl* looks upon a nature that claims a "feeling" with which she is capable of responding: "She cannot call it gladness or delight; / And yet there seems a richer, lovelier light / On e'en the humblest thing that lives."

Allston's concern with the power of giving and receiving mind, a tenet central to Coleridge and Wordsworth, explains the motifs of memory and dreaming found not only in these solitary dreaming figures but in earlier landscapes, *Moonlight Landscape* most notably. Allston may have been influenced by Wordsworth's theory that art springs from "emotion recollected in tranquillity," that is, that the artist recreates from memory the vividness of experience and only thereby is able to give it the life of art. As early as 1813 in his poem "The Sylphs of the Seasons," Allston wrote of the artist's material as "the spirits of

departed days," "images of things remote," "sounds that long had ceased to float," all of which "in mental vision wear a lustre more refined."¹⁰ In his novel *Monaldi* of 1821 Allston portrayed an artist-hero whose ostensible passiveness and reticence were really the quietness of a spot in nature "silently drinking in the light, and the heat, and the showers of heaven, that nourish the seeds of a thousand nameless flowers, destined one day to bloom and to mingle their fragrance with the breath of nature."¹¹ To create, the artist shut out the external world "to combine and give another life to the images it had left in his memory . . . [where] his quickening spirit brooded over them as over the elementary forms of a creation of his own."¹² Past scenes, Allston believed, are "in effect the truest, so long as through the mysterious memory they can give that thrilling play of life which present realities deny."¹³

Thus Allston effected a transformation of Lockean theory, which labels the mind's immediate response to sense data as its most accurate work (an idea which appears again, in later nineteenth-century art history), and a refocussing of Kantian theory, in which the mind intuitively responds to and organizes sense data. For Allston, the dimension of time allows the mind to realize its own creative principle in a process similar to the creativity of God. Memory is the very center of the creative process.

As a metaphysician finding harmony the vital principle of the universe, harmony both between mind and mind and mind and object, Allston had an intense interest in the physically harmonizing qualities of color from his earlier years of painting. Two documents from his career illustrate this especially well. The first is the painting *Coast Scene on the Mediterranean*, painted in 1811 three years after Allston had last seen the Mediterranean. In this painting the rays of the setting sun illuminate the canvas

with echoing statements of the harmonies of physical color. Violet, blue, and gold, occupying complimentary positions on the color wheel, originate and end at the central burst of sunlight which defines the eye's journey through the painting. Manuscript notes at the Massachusetts Historical Society substantiate the philosophical significance Allston attached to color: "The only known instances of complete oneness in physical nature are the three primary colours [sic], *Red, Blue, Yellow*. Unity (perfect) is the centre of Harmony: of which these *three components* of light, when joined may be considered the perfection in the physical world."

The final manifestation of Allston's metaphysical Romanticism involves one of his few direct invocations to a peculiarly American Romanticism. Like his American contemporary William Dunlap, Allston believed that art literally progresses. The great artistic accomplishments of the past, he held, enable an artist to enrich his otherwise too limited experience and create a significant work of art. The achievements of our artistic heritage, especially those of the Italian Renaissance, Allston likened to those of "the hardy pioneers of our own country, who have successively cleared before us the swamps and forests that would have obstructed our progress, and opened to us lands which the efforts of no individual, however persevering, would enable him to reach."¹⁴

In a significant aspect of his Romantic philosophy, Allston is perhaps more "American" than the great American Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson. Whereas Emerson ultimately credited the artist with being no more than a channel for the divine creative spirit, Allston wrote and painted in the consistent American faith in the sacredness and absolute individuality of each human mind. Allston painted too early in the nineteenth century to join the debate on

whether American or European subject matter was exclusively appropriate for the American artist, but with his belief in a general rather than geographic artistic tradition, he would have considered such a question beside the point.

In recognizing that Allston's career suffered a great loss of energy in America, we may ask whether it was because of his growing disaffinity with his *Belshazzar's Feast* or whether it was because America debilitated him, as William Wetmore Story speculated,¹⁵ so that he could achieve neither *Belshazzar's Feast* nor anything else.

With Allston in mind, Hawthorne proposed that the work of art had such fragility that no artist could endure the strain of a sustained career. In our consideration of Allston in terms of his own Romantic theory of creativity, however, we may well decide that memory as a creative force cannot sustain an artist throughout a lifetime. The Romantic vision of art as veiled dream and memory thus becomes a prophecy of its own future, leaving as monuments, however, most compelling imprints of the individual mind.

Elizabeth Johns

Notes

¹ The following studies are particularly important:

Flagg, Jared B. *Washington Allston, Life and Letters*. New York, 1892.

Fuller, Margaret. "A Record of Impressions, Produced by the Exhibition of Mr. Allston's Pictures in . . . 1839." *Dial*, 1 (1840), 73-84.

Gerdts, William H. "Washington Allston and the German Romantic Classicists in Rome." *Art Quarterly*, 32, No. 2 (Summer, 1969), 166-96.

Holmes, Oliver Wendell. *A Moral Antipathy*. Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1888.

Novak, Barbara. "Americans in Italy: Arcady Revisited." *Art in America*, 61 (January, 1973), 56-69.

Richardson, Edgar P. *Washington Allston: A Study of the Romantic Artist in America*. 1948; rev. New York: Apollo edition, 1967.

Sweetser, Moses F. *Allston*. Boston, 1886.

² Earl Leslie Griggs (ed.), *Unpublished Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), II, 305-6.

³ Allston's *Lectures on Art* (New York, 1850) are prefaced with an essay about

their epistemological foundation; in the Massachusetts Historical Society there exist in manuscript Allston's notes on such issues as evil and the will.

⁴ William Dunlap, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States* (1834; reprinted Boston: Goodspeed, 1918), II, 187.

⁵ *Lectures on Art*, p. 109.

⁶ *Critique of Pure Reason, Critique of Practical Reason, and Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*.

⁷ The career of Samuel F.B. Morse is a poignant illustration of the shortcomings of the American audience in this regard.

⁸ *Lectures on Art*, p. 90-92.

⁹ *Lectures on Art and Poems, and Monaldi by Washington Allston*, Nathalia Wright, ed. (Gainesville, Fla.: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1967), pp. 331-337.

¹⁰ *Lectures on Art and Poems*, p. 217.

¹¹ *Monaldi*, p. 23.

¹² *Monaldi*, p. 24.

¹³ *Monaldi*, p. 70.

¹⁴ *Lectures on Art*, p. 164.

¹⁵ Story to James Russell Lowell, Boston, December 30, 1855.



Landscape with a Lake, 1804, oil on canvas, 38"x51". Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, M&M Karolik Collection. (Not in exhibition.)

Biographical Notes

- 1779 Washington Allston born (November 5) on Allston Plantation, District of Georgetown, South Carolina.
- 1787 Sent to school at Newport R.I. Met his future wife Ann Channing and her brother William Ellery Channing.
- 1796 Entered Harvard College. Lived one year in the house of Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse (friend of Gilbert Stuart).
- 1800 Graduated from Harvard as class poet. Spent fall and winter in Newport. Went to Charleston to sell his inheritance (to finance his art studies abroad.)
- 1801-1808 First European Period
- 1801 Sailed to England in May with miniature painter Edward G. Malbone. Admitted to the Royal Academy school in September. Befriended by Benjamin West.
- 1802 Exhibited three pictures.
- 1803 In November, arrived in Paris with American painter John Vanderlyn by way of Holland and Belgium. Trip made possible by the break in the Napoleonic wars after the Peace of Amiens.
- 1804 Painted RISING OF A THUNDERSTORM AT SEA in Paris. Went to Italy alone in late spring. Made drawings in Switzerland of specific mountains used in later landscapes. Stopped in Siena to learn Italian. Settled in Rome where he formed lasting friendships with Washington Irving and Samuel Coleridge. Painted LANDSCAPE WITH A LAKE.
- 1804-1808 Visited Venice and Florence. Made academic drawings in German and French styles. Made the acquaintance of Canova, Thorvaldsen and Schick. Painted in 1805: DIANA AND THE CHASE, ITALIAN LANDSCAPE, and SELF PORTRAIT. From 1807 to 1808 worked on but never finished the huge JASON RETURNING TO DEMAND HIS FATHER'S KINGDOM which shows the influence of Guillion Le Thièrre, head of the French Academy in Rome.
- 1808 In April, left Italy for America, as a result of the resumption of the wars.
- 1808-1811 Boston Period
Kept a studio in Court Street that had been Smibert's, Copley's and Trumbull's. Painted portraits of his family and friends, including THE VALENTINE (1809) of his wife, WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING (1809-1811), and MRS. WILLIAM CHANNING (1811). Also painted THE POOR AUTHOR AND THE RICH BOOKSELLER (1811), and wrote verse later published in *The Sylphs of the Season*.

- 1811-1818** Second British Period.
- 1811** Left in July for England with his wife and his pupil Samuel F. B. Morse.
- 1812** Joined in February by a second American pupil, Charles R. Leslie, who was to become a successful British genre painter and biographer of John Constable. Allston's circle included Coleridge, Irving, John Howard Payne, and Lord George Beaumont. Beaumont commissioned *ANGEL RELEASING ST. PETER FROM PRISON*.
- 1813** *DEAD MAN REVIVED BY TOUCHING THE BONES OF THE PROPHET ELISHA* won prize at the British Institution's Exhibition. Book of poems *Sylphs of the Season* published in London and Boston. Became ill from strain of working on *DEAD MAN REVIVED* ... Taken to Dr. King of Clifton near Bristol.
- 1814** Spent much of the year in Bristol recovering. Held exhibition in Bristol starting July 25. Painted portraits of *BENJAMIN WEST* and *SAMUEL T. COLERIDGE*. Introduced to John Martin and William Collins by Leslie.
- 1815** Returned to London. His wife, Ann Channing Allston, died in February.
- 1817** Made first study for *BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST*. For six weeks visited Paris with Leslie and Collins. Copied Veronese and Titian. Returned with renewed energies and painted *URIEL IN THE SUN*, *ELIJAH IN THE DESERT*, and *JACOB'S DREAM*, which were very popular.
- 1818** Elected associate member of the American Academy of Fine Arts in New York, in May. Painted *SAMUEL WILLIAMS* portrait. Returned to the United States in September.
- 1818-1843** Final American Period
- 1818** Wintered in Boston.
- 1819** Summered in Cambridgeport. Painted *MOONLIT LANDSCAPE*, *BEATRICE*, and *FLIGHT OF FLORIMEL* among others.
- 1820** Allston Trust created to enable Allston to finish *BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST*. Painted *JEREMIAH DICTATING HIS PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM TO BARUCH THE SCRIBE*, and *SAUL AND THE WITCH*.
- 1821** Met the young Thomas Sully and Horatio Greenough, who was at Harvard. Painted *LANDSCAPE, EVENING*.
- 1825** Served on the committee to select the Bunker Hill Monument.
- 1827** Participated in first exhibition at Boston Atheneum.
- 1828** Forced to roll up *BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST* and moved to smaller studio.

- 1830 Married Martha Dana, and moved to her house in Cambridgeport. Furnished designs for Shepard Congregational Church, Cambridge.
- 1831 Painted SPALATRO'S VISION OF THE BLOODY HAND and SPANISH GIRL IN REVERIE.
- 1833 Refused to paint secular history painting for Rotunda of Washington Capitol. Suggested Morse and Vanderlyn instead.
- 1834 W. Dunlap published *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States*.
- 1835 Painted EVENING HYMN, LANDSCAPE AMERICAN SCENERY: TIME AFTERNOON, WITH A SOUTHWEST HAZE, and ROSALIE.
- 1836 His biographer J. B. Flagg began his studies with Allston.
- Before 1837 Composed the unfinished TITANIA'S COURT, SHIP IN A SQUALL, and DEATH OF KING JOHN.
- 1839 Exhibited 47 paintings at Harding's gallery.
- 1840 Painted AMY ROBSART.
- 1841 Elected first president of the Boston Artist's Association. Ill until summer 1842. Published *Monaldi, a Tale*.
- 1842 Designed monument to Dr. William Ellery Channing in Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge. During the winter read *Lectures On Art* to Longfellow.
- 1843 Died in July in Cambridgeport, still at work on BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST.
- 1844 Mrs. Anna Jameson published in London an appraisal of Allston's work.
- 1850 *Outlines and Sketches by Washington Allston* engraved by I. and S. W. Cheney.
- 1852 *Lectures on the Works and Genius of Washington Allston* by William Ware.
- 1878 Wing added to the Boston Museum contained "Allston Room".
- 1879 *Allston* by M. F. Sweetser.
- 1881 EXHIBITION OF THE WORKS OF WASHINGTON ALLSTON, MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, JULY 18.
- 1889 *Washington Allston, Life and Letters* by Jared B. Flagg.
- 1946 Exhibition of twenty Allston paintings at Symphony Hall, Boston.
- 1947 *Washington Allston*, exhibition at the Detroit Institute and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
- 1948 *Washington Allston*, by E. P. Richardson.



5 Italian Landscape, 1805–1808, oil on canvas, 39"×51". Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.

Exhibition

A large number of Washington Allston's works have yet to be ascribed to a particular time. The first part of this catalog listing includes those paintings and drawings whose dates are known; the second part, those unknown.

Several photographs of works not in the exhibition have been included in this catalog for additional reference.

- 1 **A Rocky Coast with Banditti**, 1800, oil on canvas, 13¼"×19". *The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.*
- 2 **Landscape**, 1801–1803, oil on canvas, 28"×38". *The Concord Free Library, Concord, Massachusetts.*
- 3 **Landscape**, 1801–1803, oil and chalk on canvas, 29"×36". *M. Knoedler & Co., Inc., New York City.*
- 4 **Man of the Theater**, c. 1803, oil on canvas, 30½"×27¾". *Kennedy Galleries, New York City.*
- 5 **Italian Landscape**, 1805–1808, oil on canvas, 39"×51". *Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.*
- 6 **Dido and Anna**, 1805–1808, oil on millboard, 24"×18½". *Lowe Art Museum collection.*
- 7 **Dido and Anna**, 1805–1808, chalk on canvas, 91"×67½". *Lowe Art Museum collection.*
- 8 **Moses and the Serpent or, The Romans and the Serpent of Epidauros**, 1805–1808, oil on canvas, 14½"×17½". *The Gibbes Art Gallery, Charleston, South Carolina.*
- 9 **David Playing Before Saul**, 1805–1808, oil on canvas, 14½"×17½". *The Gibbes Art Gallery, Charleston.*
- 10 **Jason Returning to Demand His Father's Kingdom**, 1807–1808, oil and chalk on canvas, 168"×240". *Lowe Art Museum collection.*
- 11 **Jason Returning to Demand His Father's Kingdom (study)**, 1807–1808, black crayon on paper mounted on canvas, 34¾"×44". *The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, loan, the Washington Allston Trust.*
- 12 **William Ellery Channing**, 1809–1811, oil on canvas, 31"×27½". *The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, gift of William Francis Channing.*
- 13 **Coast Scene on the Mediterranean**, 1811, oil on canvas, 34"×40". *The Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, South Carolina.*
- 14 **Study for Belshazzar's Feast**, 1817, oil on cardboard, 25½"×34¼". *The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, bequest of Ruth Charlotte Dana, the artist's niece.*
- 15 **Head of a Jew**, 1817, oil on canvas, 29¾"×25". *The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, deposited by the Boston Athenaeum.*
- 16 **Isaac of York**, 1817, oil on canvas, 30"×25". *The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, deposited by the Boston Athenaeum.*
- 17 **Portrait of Samuel Williams**, 1818, oil on canvas, 56"×44". *The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, purchase, the Mr. and Mrs. William H. Marlatt Fund.*
- 18 **Study for the Head of Jeremiah**, 1819, oil on millboard, 22¾"×19¾". *Hirschl and Adler Galleries, New York City.*
- 19 **Saul and the Witch of Endor**, 1820–1821, oil on canvas, 34"×47". *The Amherst College Collection, Amherst, Massachusetts.*

- 20 **Classical Landscape**, 1821, oil on canvas, 25½"×34". *The IBM Corporation collection.*
- 21 **Italian Shepherd Boy**, 1821–1823, oil on canvas, 47½"×34½". *The Brooklyn Museum, New York City, the Dick S. Ramsay Fund.*
- 22 **Italian Landscape**, 1828–1830, oil on canvas, 30¼"×25¾". *The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan, the Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., Fund.*
- 23 **Lorenzo and Jessica**, 1832, oil on canvas, 15"×18". *The Honorable John M. Cabot.*
- 24 **Landscape, American Scenery**, 1835, oil on canvas, 18½"×24½". *The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, bequest of Edmund Dwight.*

The following works have not been properly dated as of this exhibition:

- 25 **Heliodorus Driven from the Temple**, chalk on brown-toned canvas, 45¾"×57". *Mugar Memorial Library, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts.*
- 26 **Heliodorus Driven from the Temple**, chalk on brown-toned canvas, 45¾"×57". *Lowe Art Museum collection.*
- 27 **The Sibyl**, chalk on brown-toned canvas, 83¾"×59½". *Lowe Art Museum collection.*
- 28 **Una**, oil on canvas, 31¾"×25¾". *Lowe Art Museum collection.*
- 29 **Study of a Foot**, oil on millboard, 15¾"×23¾". *Lowe Art Museum collection.*
- 30 **Jessica and Lorenzo**, unfinished oil sketch, 33¼"×28½". *Boston University, Boston.*
- 31 **Infants and Parents**, oil sketch on canvas, 26"×32". *Mugar Memorial Library, Boston University, Boston.*
- 32 **Angel of Wrath Over Jerusalem**, oil sketch on canvas, 29½"×36½". *Mugar Memorial Library, Boston University, Boston.*
- 33 **Landscape Sketch**, drawing, 4¾"×6½". *The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, loan, the Washington Allston Trust.*
- 34 **Hand**, black and white chalk with stumping on faded blue paper, 9¾"×12¾". *The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Boston, loan, the Washington Allston Trust.*
- 35 **Shoulder and Hand Studies**, black and white chalk on brown paper, 11¾"×19¾" (irregular). *The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, loan, the Washington Allston Trust.*
- 36 **Nude Male**, black and white chalk on brown paper, 21-1/16"×17¾". *The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Massachusetts, loan, the Washington Allston Trust.*
- 37 **Study for Daniel**, black and white chalk with stumping on faded blue paper, 8¾"×9¾", 5¾"×7¾". *The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Massachusetts, loan, the Washington Allston Trust.*
- 38 **Landscape, Indian Summer**, oil on canvas, 21"×30". *Lowe Art Museum collection.*
- 39 **Mother and Child**, oil sketch on canvas, 38"×32". *Lowe Art Museum collection.*
- 40 **Figure Study**, chalk on canvas, 24½"×20". *Lowe Art Museum collection.*
- 41 **Lady in Red**, oil on canvas, 16"×13". *Collection of Mr. James J. Minot, Beverly, Massachusetts.*



7 Dido and Anna, 1805–1808, chalk on canvas, 91"×67½". Lowe Art Museum collection.



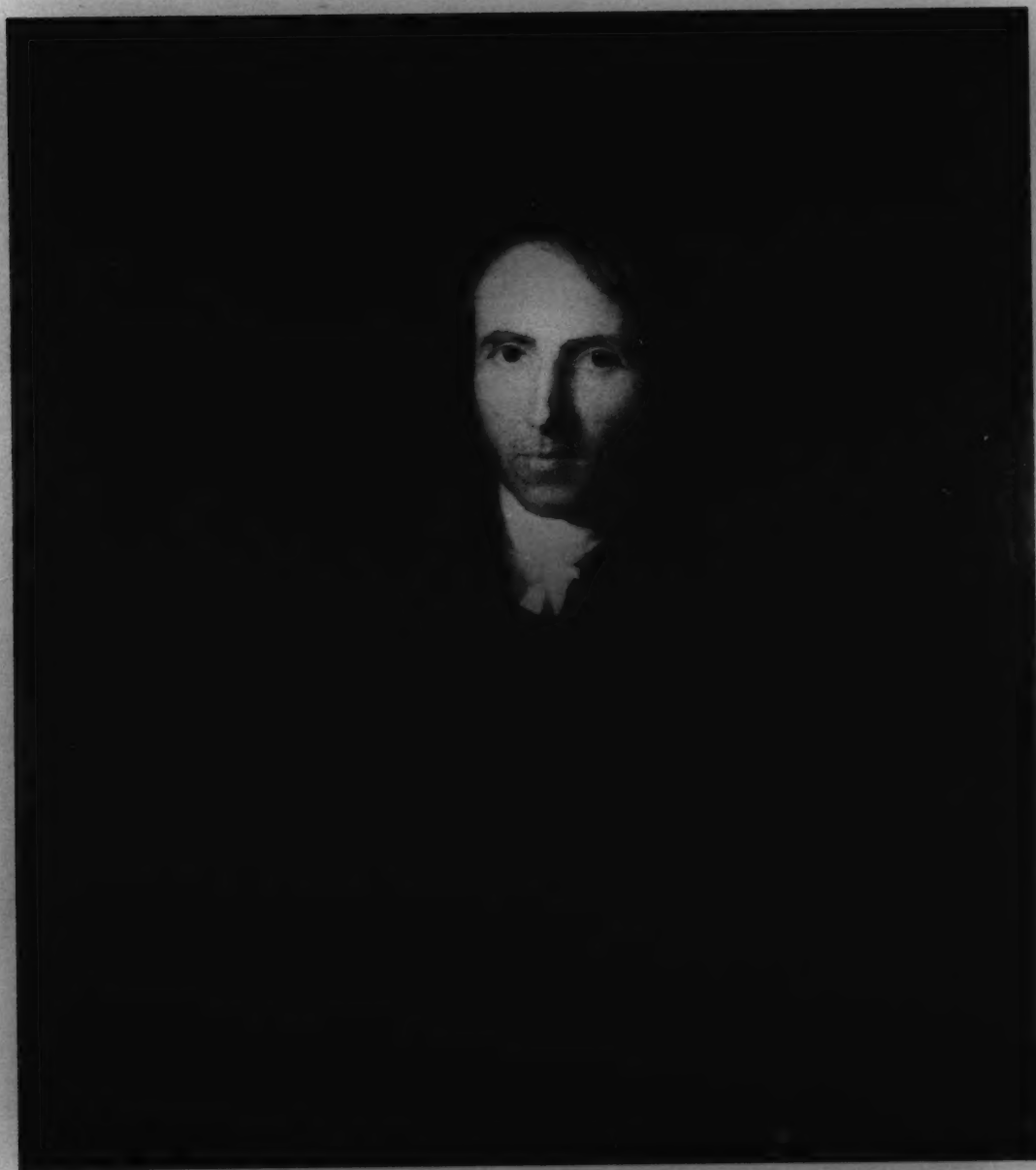
8 Moses and the Serpent or, The Romans and the Serpent of Epidauros, 1805-1808, oil on canvas, 14½"×17½". The Gibbes Art Gallery, Charleston, South Carolina.



9 David Playing Before Saul, 1805-1808, oil on canvas, $14\frac{1}{2}'' \times 17\frac{1}{2}''$. The Gibbes Art Gallery, Charleston.



11 Jason Returning to Demand His Father's Kingdom (study), 1807–1808, black crayon on paper mounted on canvas, 34 $\frac{3}{4}$ " $\times$ 44". *The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, loan, the Washington Allston Trust.*



12 William Ellery Channing, 1809–1811, oil on canvas, 31"×27½". The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, gift of William Francis Channing.



The Poor Author and the Rich Bookseller, 1811, oil on canvas, 31"×27 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, bequest of Charles Sprague Sargent. (Not in exhibition.)



13 Coast Scene on the Mediterranean, 1811, oil on canvas, 34"x40". The Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, South Carolina.



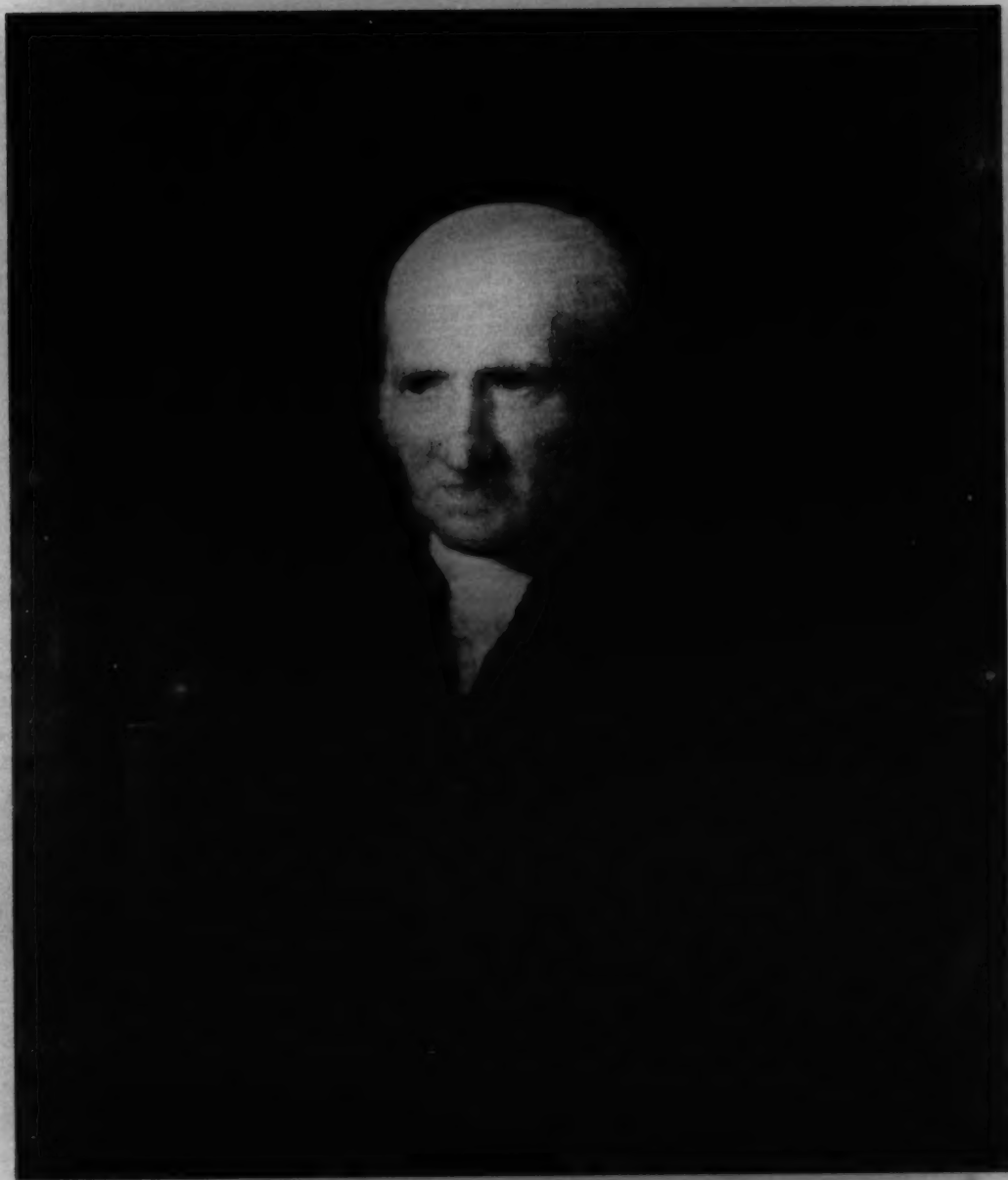
Angel Releasing St. Peter from Prison (study), 1812, oil on canvas, 214 $\frac{3}{8}$ " $\times$ 108 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, gift of Robert William Harper through the Worcester State Hospital. (Not in exhibition.)*



The Angel Releasing St. Peter from Prison, 1812, oil on canvas, 124½"×108½". Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, gift of Robert William Harper through the Worcester State Hospital. (Not in exhibition.)



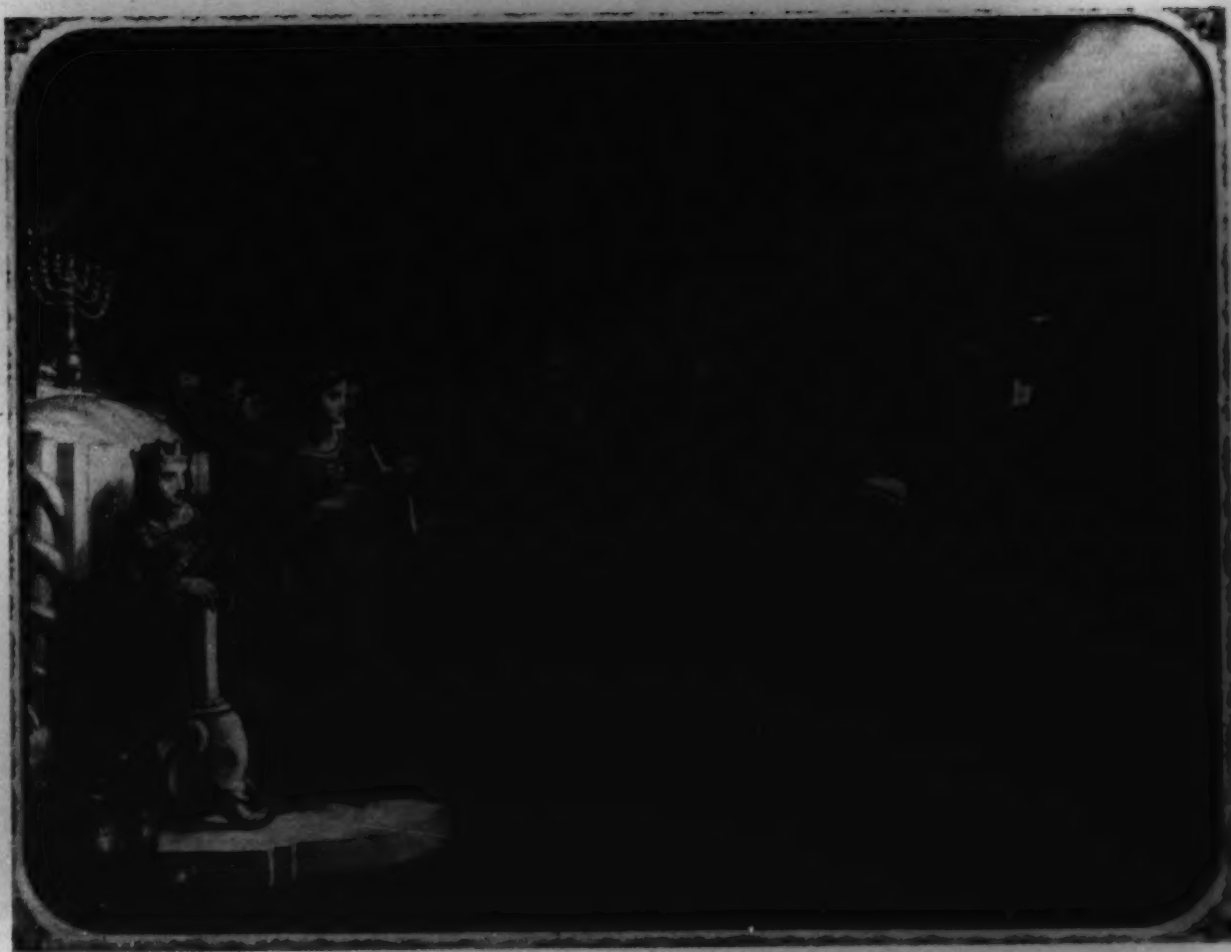
Christ Healing the Sick, 1813, sepia and white on millboard, 27¼"×39¼". Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, loan, the Washington Allston Trust. (Not in exhibition.)



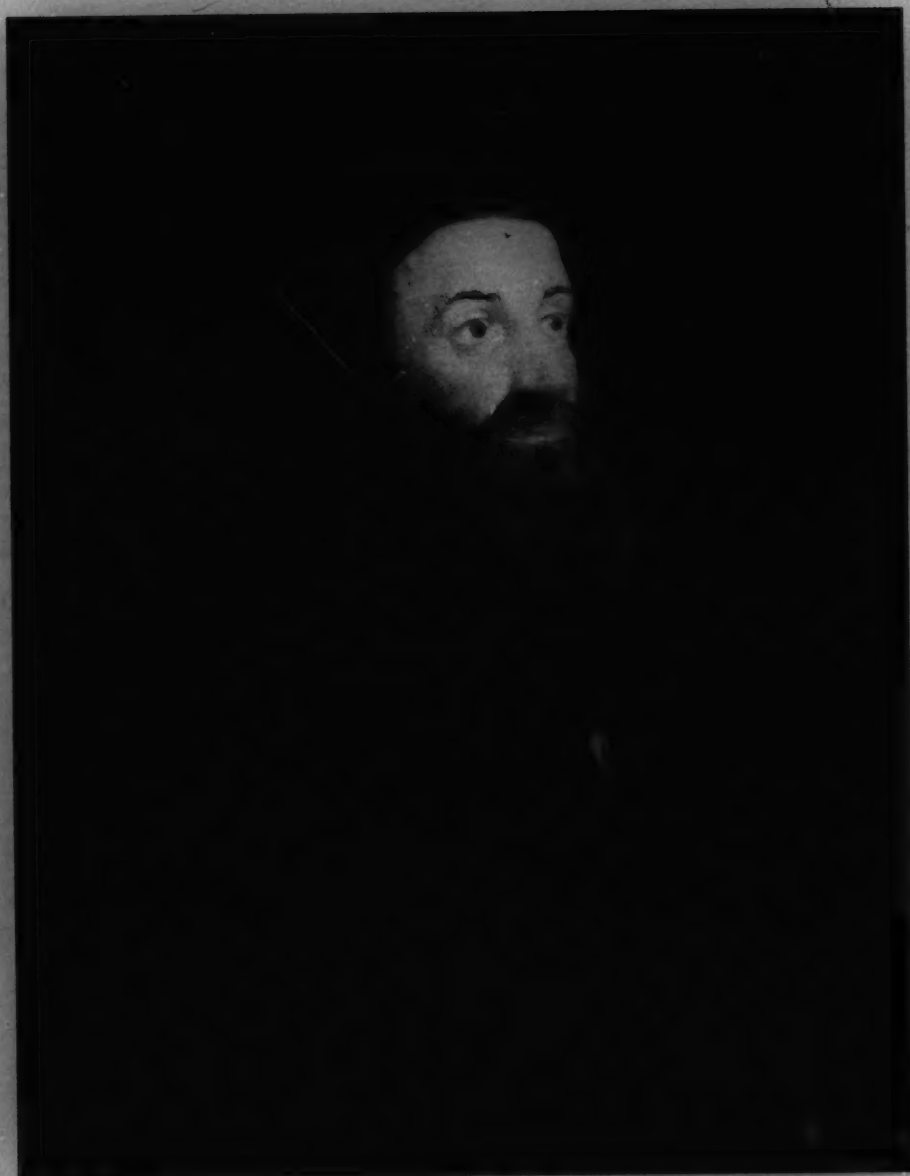
Benjamin West, 1814, oil on canvas, 30"x25". Boston Athenaeum. (Not in exhibition.)



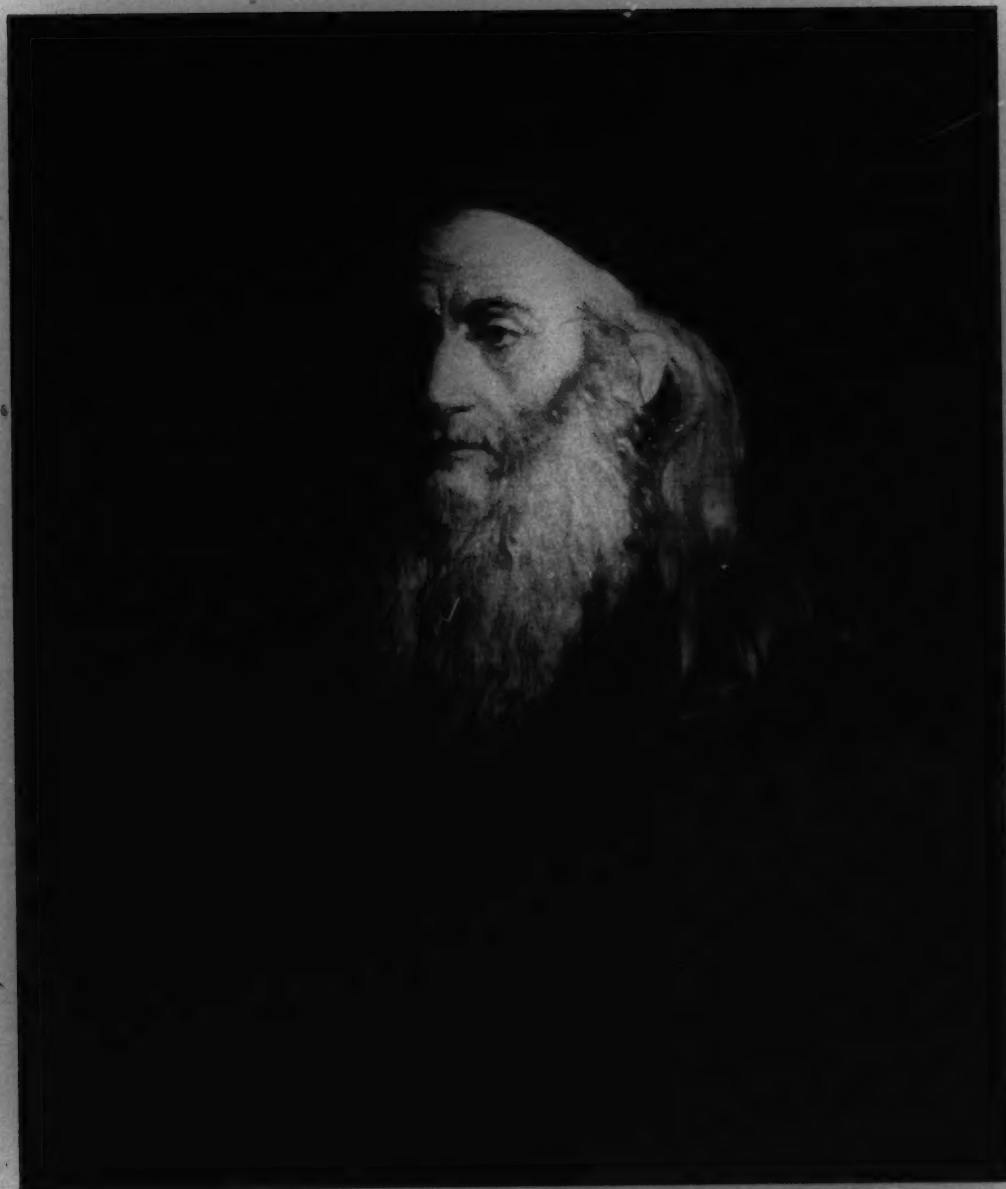
The Dead Man Revived by Touching the Bones of the Prophet Elisha, 1816? oil on canvas, 156"×120". The Pennsylvania Academy of Arts. (Not in exhibition.)



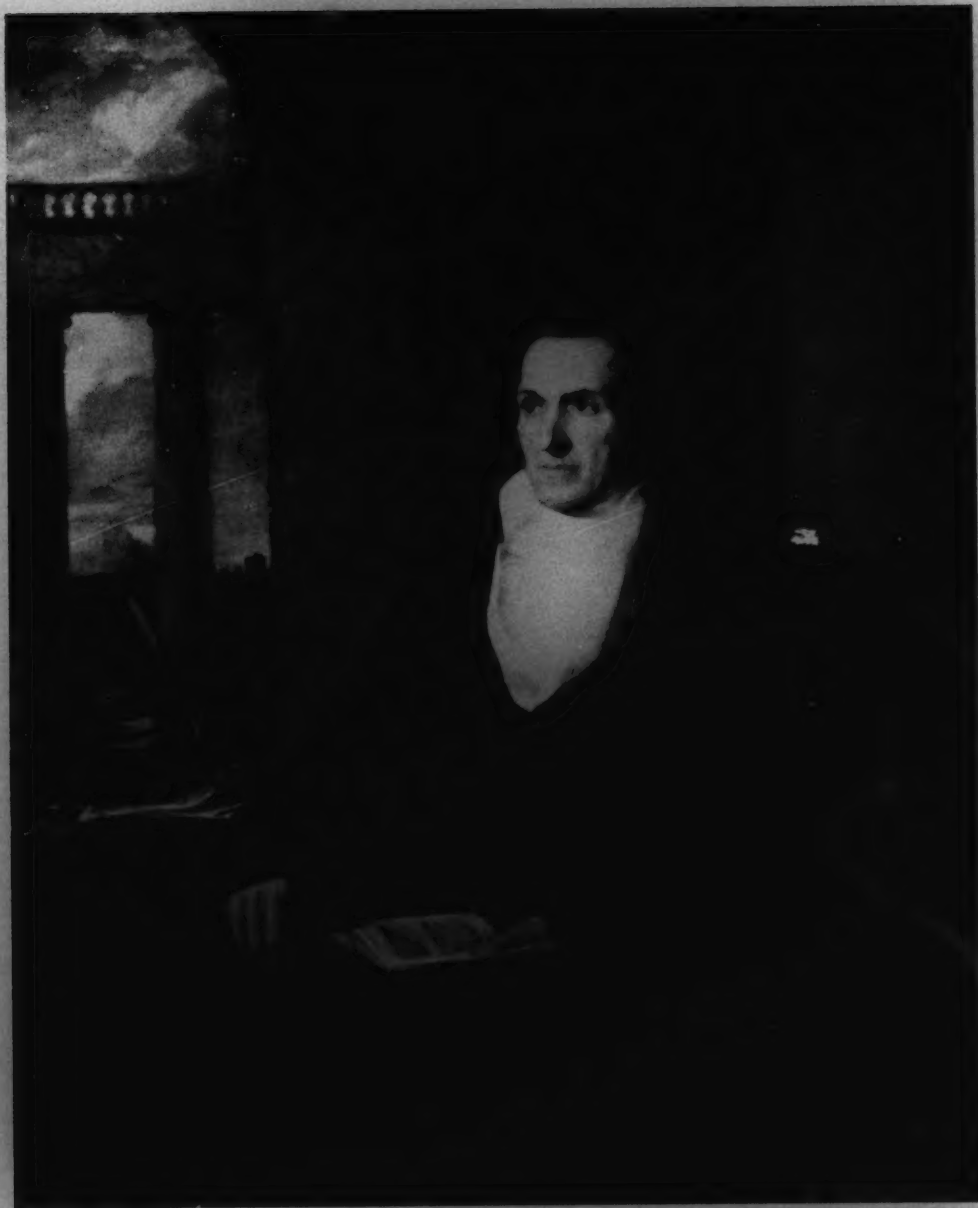
14 Study for *Belshazzar's Feast*, 1817, oil on cardboard, 25½" x 34¼". The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, bequest of Ruth Charlotte Dana, the artist's niece.



15 Head of a Jew, 1817, oil on canvas, 29 $\frac{1}{4}$ " $\times$ 25". The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, deposited by the Boston Athenaeum.



16 Isaac of York, 1817, oil on canvas, 30"x25". The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, deposited by the Boston Athenaeum.



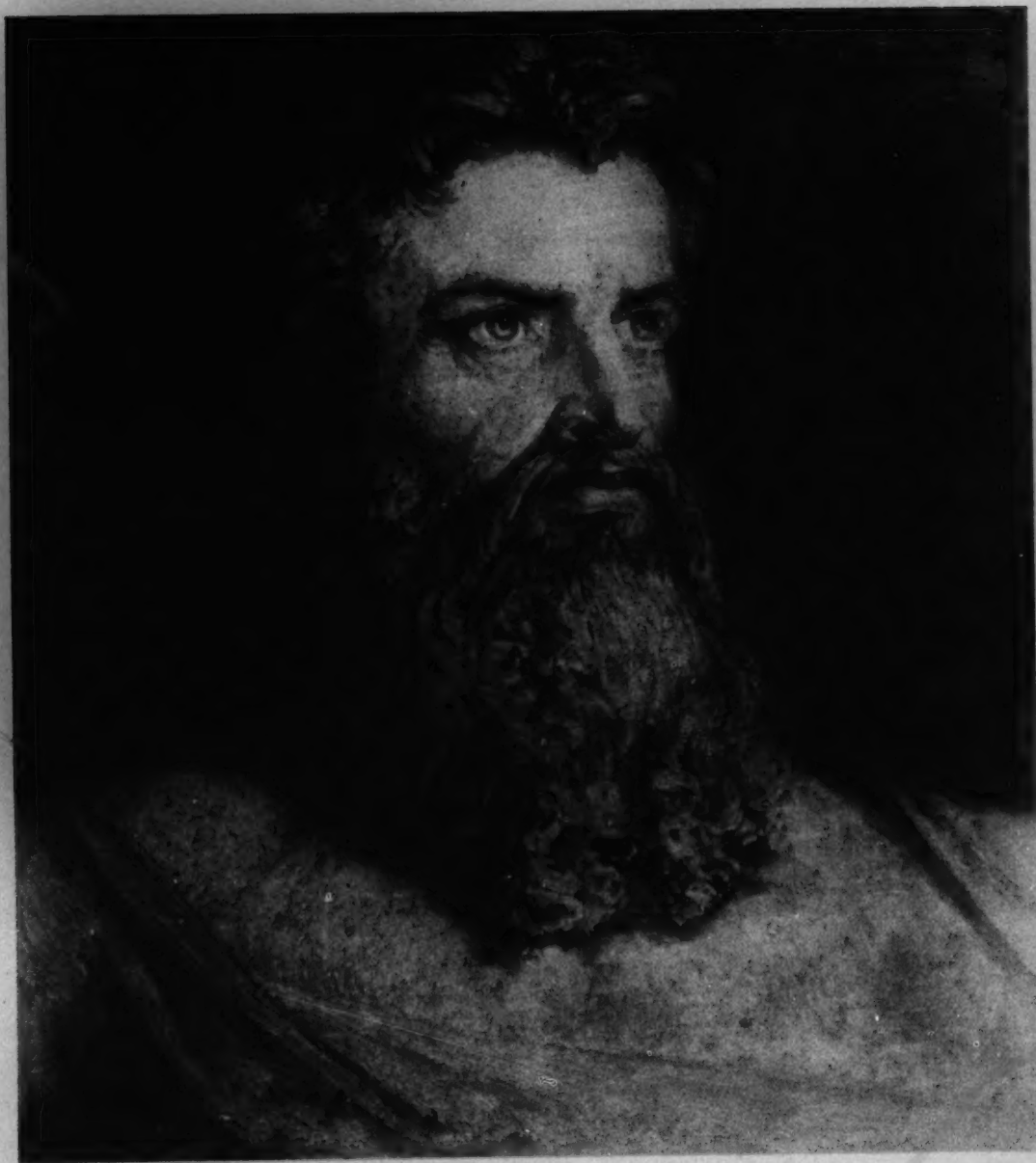
17 Portrait of Samuel Williams, 1818, oil on canvas, 56''x44''. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, purchase, the Mr. and Mrs. William H. Marlatt Fund.



Wouter Van Twiller's Decision in the Case of Wandle Schoonhoven and Barent Bleecker, 1817, engraving. *New York Public Library, Aster, Lennox, and Tilder Foundations.*
(Not in exhibition.)



Jacob's Dream, 1817, oil on canvas, 62"x94". Private collection. (Not in exhibition.)



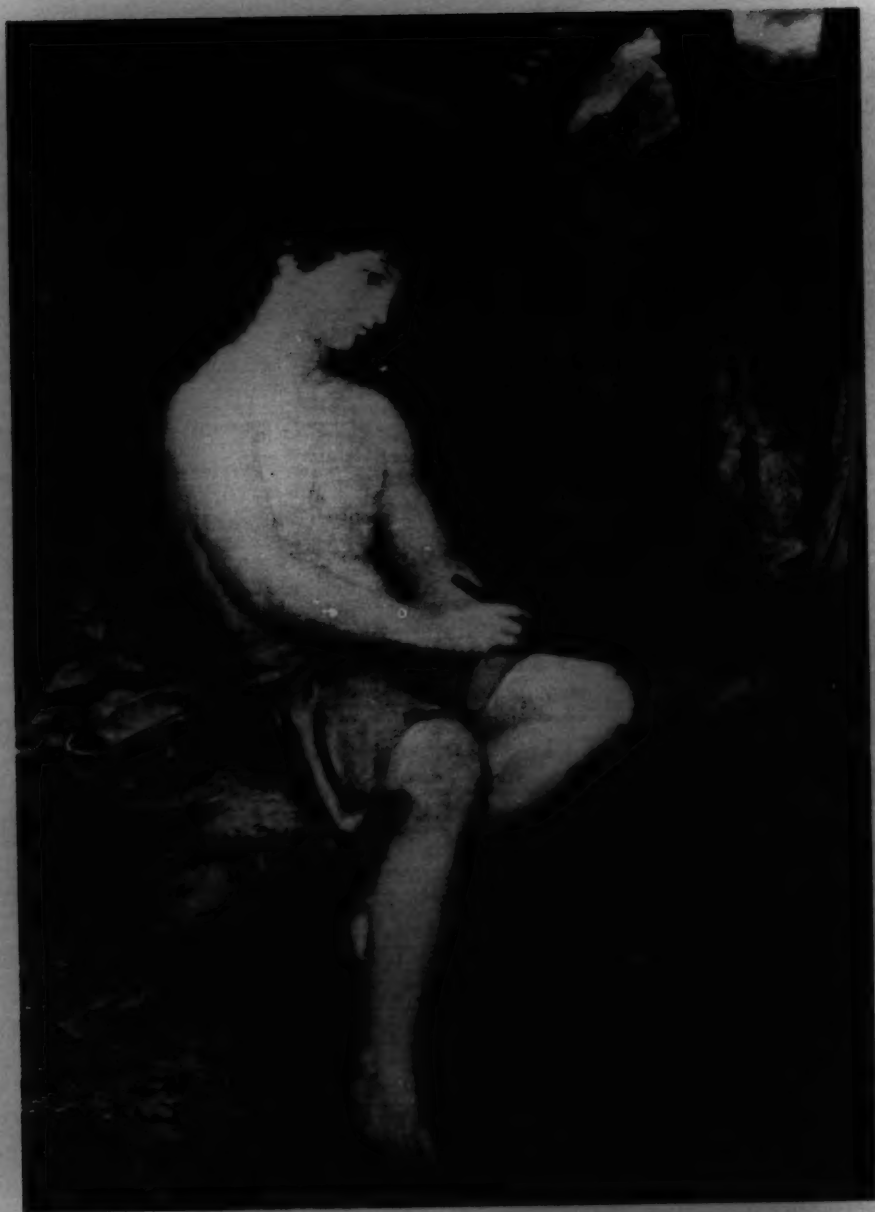
18 Study for the Head of Jeremiah, 1819, oil on millboard, 22 $\frac{3}{4}$ " $\times$ 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Hirschl and Adler Galleries, New York City.



19 Saul and the Witch of Endor, 1820-1821, oil on canvas, 34"×47". The Amherst College Collection, Amherst, Massachusetts.



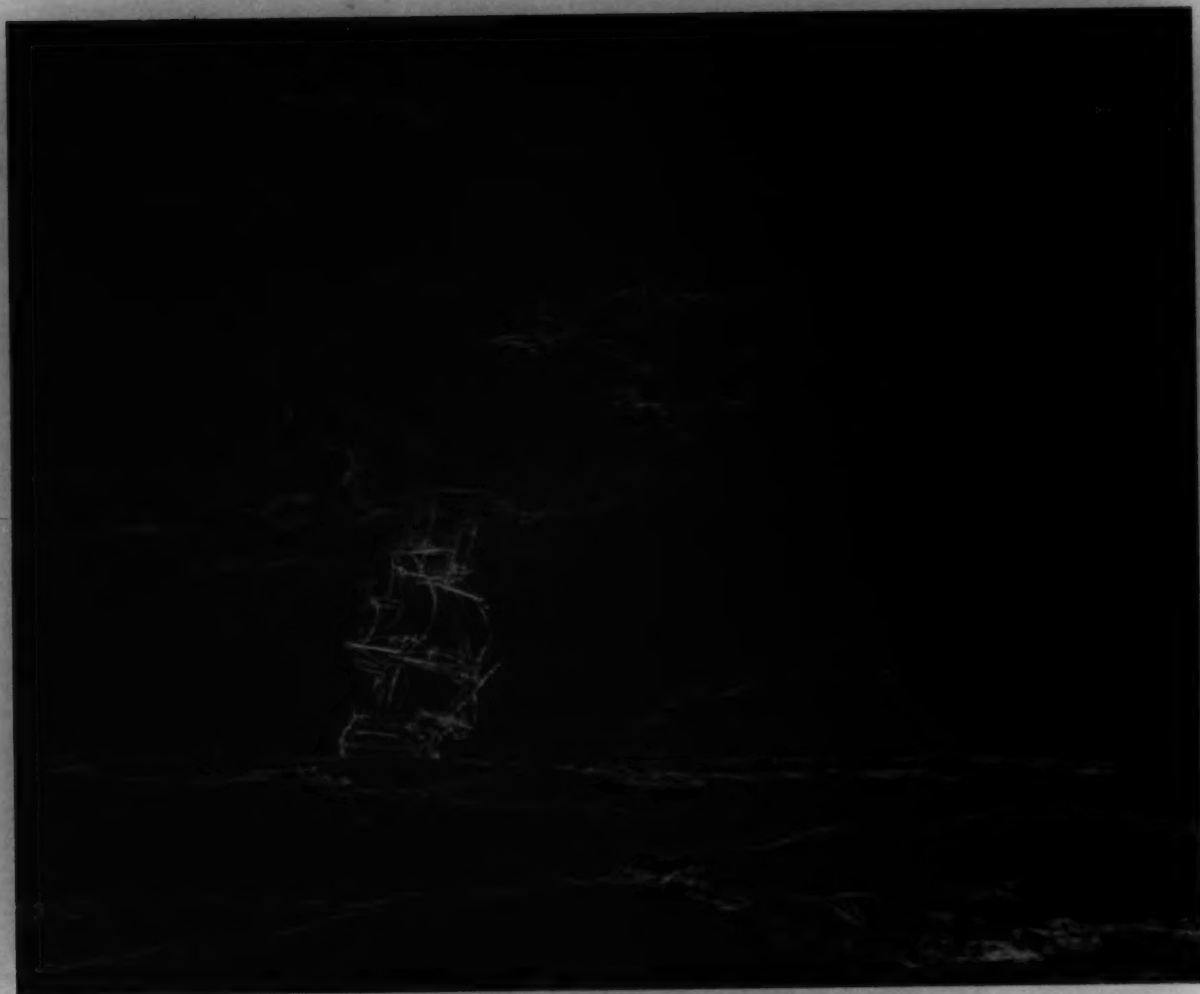
20. **Classical Landscape**, 1821, oil on canvas, $23\frac{1}{4}'' \times 34''$. The IBM Corporation collection.



21 Italian Shepherd Boy, 1821-1823, oil on canvas, 47½"×34½". The Brooklyn Museum, New York City, the Dick S. Ramsay Fund.



22 Italian Landscape, 1828-1830, oil on canvas, 30 $\frac{1}{4}$ "x25 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Michigan, the Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., Fund.



Ship in a Squall, before 1837, chalk on brown-toned canvas, 48½"×60". Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, loan, the Washington Allston Trust. (Not in exhibition.)



26 Heliodorus Driven from the Temple, chalk on brown-toned canvas, 45 1/2" x 57". Lowe Art Museum collection.



29 Study of a Foot, oil on millboard, 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x23 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Lowe Art Museum collection.



36 **Nude Male**, black and white chalk on brown paper, 21-1/16"×17 3/4". The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Massachusetts, loan, the Washington Allston Trust.



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Boston University

The Brooklyn Museum

The Honorable John M. Cabot

The Cleveland Museum of Art

Columbia Museum of Art

Concord Free Library

The Detroit Institute of Arts

Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University

Gibbes Art Gallery

Hirschl & Adler Galleries

IBM Corporation

Kennedy Galleries

M. Knoedler & Company

The Lowe Art Museum

Mr. James J. Minot

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Museum of Fine Arts, Boston